HOW SAFE ARE ROLLER COASTERS?

Every year, the National Safety Council publishes its "Injury Facts" booklet that compares relative passenger safety among modes of transportation using "fatalities per 100 million passenger miles." This methodology is readily adapted to the number of fatalities per mile occurring on roller coasters. The table below averages the data over four years, but the relationship is relatively stable within each year. The bottom line is that, statistically, you are at greater risk of a fatal accident driving in a car to the park to ride a roller coaster, but if you take a bus, train or plane to the park, your risk of a fatal accident increases after you get to the park and take a ride on a roller coaster.

FATALITIES

	1997	1998	1999	2000	Fatalities Per 100 mil miles
Automobiles	21,920	21,099	20,763	2,044	0.86
Roller Coasters	3	4	6	1	0.70
Railroad Passenger Trains	6	4	14	4	0.05
Scheduled Airlines	42	1	17	87	0.01
Buses	4	26	39	3	0.04

[1] Passenger miles formula= # of passenger (the average # of rides[2])* (the average # of rides per person[3])* the average length of a ride in most visited parks (2880 ft)/5280

[2]The average # of rides per year source: IAAPA website http://www.iaapa.org/modules/MediaNews/index.cfm?fuseaction=Details&mtid=3&iid=1051

[3]Rides per passenger source: May 16, 2000 Testimony of John R. Graff (President of IAAPA) for Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Trade, and Consumer Protection

[4]Fatalities from Automobiles, Railroad Passengers, Scheduled Airlines, and Buses source: the National Safety Council's "Injury Facts" 2002 ed. p 128

[5]Roller Coaster Fatalities source: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website http://www.cpsc.gov/LIBRARY/Amus2002.pdf